

The Applicants submit that the claims of Groups I, III, and IV are directly dependent from the claims of Group II by virtue of the present amendment, and as such it is improper to separate these claims. Accordingly, the Restriction Requirement should be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Restriction Requirement on the grounds that no adequate reasons and/or examples have been provided to support a conclusion of patentable distinctness between the identified groups.

Further, MPEP §803 states as follows:

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on its merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.

Applicants submit that a search of all claims would not constitute a serious burden on the Office, particularly in view of the fact that Groups I and IV are classified in the same subclass (class 800, subclass 829).

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified application is now in condition for examination on the merits, and early notice of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) [A] The method for increasing stress resistance to a plant according to claim 5, which comprises introducing a raffinose synthase gene into the plant body.--

--6. (Amended) [A] The method for increasing stress resistance to a plant according to claim 5, which comprises improving raffinose synthetic activity in the plant body.

7. (Amended) [A] The method for increasing stress resistance to a plant according to claim 5, which comprises excessively expressing the following protein (c) or (d) in the plant body:

(c) a protein comprising an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 1,

(d) a protein comprising an amino acid sequence differing from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 by deletion, substitution or addition of at least one or more amino acids, and having raffinose synthetic activity.--



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